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UKRAINE CONFIDENCE BUILDING INITIATIVE

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ACRONYMS

ATO	Anti-Terrorist Operation
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DDGS	Direct Distribution of Goods and Services
DPR	Donetsk People's Republic
FMR	Final Monitoring Report
GMU	grants management unit
IDP	internally displaced person
LPR	Luhansk People's Republic
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	non-governmental organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PDO	Program Development Officer
PS	Procurement Specialist
SCORE	Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
UCBI	Ukraine Confidence Building Initiative
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) launched the Ukraine Confidence Building Initiative (UCBI) in July 2014 in response to the socio-political upheaval facing the country in the wake of the Euro-Maidan Revolution, Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea, and the mass displacement of people caused by a Russian-instigated armed conflict in the country's East. Given this context, UCBI was established to complement ongoing USAID efforts to support a successful democratic transition and promote national cohesion in the wake of the conflict in the East.

During the period of February 2016 to July 2016, UCBI maintained the same geographic and operational footprint, continuing to operate in Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kyiv, and the liberated territories of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts. Based on the outcomes of periodic strategic reviews, UCBI revised the program sub-objectives and increased its focus on the liberated areas, including the southern Donetsk city of Mariupol.

UCBI assistance comes in the form of small, in-kind grants (goods, services, and technical support) and fixed amount awards to a range of partners, including national and local civilian government entities, civil society organizations, and community leaders. In order to achieve program goals, the team has identified three objectives and associated sub-objectives that target critical areas where OTI has a comparative advantage among international donors because of the project's ability to implement fast and flexible programming. UCBI's programming is guided by analysis of local dynamics and geographic regions and activities addressing each sub-objective vary based on the assessed needs and opportunities.

Objective 1: Increase capacity of vulnerable communities to manage tensions exacerbated by the conflict in the East

Sub-objective 1.1: Increase support for an inclusive definition of Ukrainian identity (new as of June 2016)

Sub-objective 1.2: Enable participation of conflict-affected groups in public, economic and political life (new as of June 2016)

Objective 2: Increase constructive engagement between government and citizens at the local level

Sub-objective 2.1: Increase demonstrations of reform by members of local government

Sub-objective 2.2: Increase civic engagement in issues of local governance and implementation of national reform processes

Objective 3: Increase citizen resilience against divisive and biased information

Sub-objective 3.1: Increase consumption of diverse and balanced sources of information

Sub-objective 3.2: Increase capacity of regional media to produce useful, demand-driven news and information for local audiences.

UKRAINE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL COUNTRY CONTEXT

Political Crisis. The early months of 2016 were marked by ongoing political crisis in Ukraine. After months of widespread public criticism about the slow pace of reforms and the deteriorating state of the economy, Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk resigned. The Ukrainian parliament, after intense public debate about the direction in which the country was heading, approved the appointment of Volodymyr Groysman, a Poroshenko confidant, as the new Prime Minister on April 14, 2016. Efforts by Groysman to form a new government were challenged following allegations put forward in the so-called “Panama Papers” - a trove of 11.5 million documents leaked from the Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca - which claimed President Petro Poroshenko illegally started a business and used offshore accounts to avoid paying taxes in Ukraine. The President denied the tax evasion charges, claiming his actions were completely legal. The political fallout from the document leak complicated the already difficult political challenge of forming a new coalition. However, in spite of delays in forming, the new government has disproven many of its skeptics and the reform process, while slow, has not been entirely derailed.

De-communization process: cities, towns and villages across Ukraine are renamed. About 300 Ukrainian cities, towns, and villages were officially renamed as part of the country's de-communization drive. This came into force after a parliamentary decision in May 2016. Major changes included Ukraine's third largest city of Dnipropetrovsk, which is now to be called Dnipro.

Release of Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko from Russian prison. Nadiya Savchenko, the military pilot who became a national hero in Ukraine after two years of detention by Russia, was released on May 25, 2016. The 35-year-old was accused of killing two Russian journalists hit by mortar fire at a checkpoint in eastern Ukraine and sentenced to 22 years in prison. Human Rights Watch called the Russian trial that led to her conviction “unsound” and “highly politicized” and her capture, trial, and detention was widely criticized by the international community. National efforts, combined with diplomatic international pressure, resulted in the exchange and return to Ukraine of Savchenko for two captured Russian soldiers. Since her return, Savchenko has become a national political player, often championing an anti-war populist perspective.

Little progress with the Minsk II Peace Agreement. More than a year has passed since Ukraine and pro-Russian separatists from Donetsk and Luhansk agreed to the Minsk II Peace Agreement, which contains 13 provisions to promote a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Most of the provisions of Minsk II remain unfulfilled. The OSCE mission in Ukraine reported that both sides continue to violate the agreement. According to Minsk II, one of the core provisions for a political solution is constitutional reform for local authorities in the separatist-held regions to guarantee their autonomy. The vote on the amendments following the first reading in Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) at the end of August 2015 passed by a simple majority, but was accompanied by violent protests. The second vote, required to make Constitutional changes, has been postponed indefinitely.

President Poroshenko held talks with the G5 leaders from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy during the NATO Summit on July 8-9, 2016 in Warsaw, Poland during which U.S. President Barack Obama stated that the G5 leaders had met with President Poroshenko to reaffirm their strong support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). According to the Ministry of Social Policy, 1,785,740 IDPs were registered in Ukraine as of June 6, 2016. A significant number of IDPs have chosen to relocate to regions in Eastern Ukraine, close to their previous homes indicating that many IDPs intend to return home. A new study by the UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) shows that after two years of displacement, host communities in Ukraine remain supportive of IDPs. According to the research, presented jointly with the Ministry of Temporary Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons in Kyiv, nearly all respondents (83 percent) maintain positive or neutral attitudes towards people displaced by the conflict in the east.

Zaporizhzhia

Adoption of the Participatory/Public City Budget. An open and participatory budget process was adopted in Zaporizhzhia in April 2016. Under the new provisions, the Zaporizhzhia community, upon a collection of 200 signatures, can submit any public improvement priority for inclusion in the city budget. The selection of projects will be made by a coordination council, while Zaporizhzhia residents will directly vote for the best project proposals to be implemented and funded through the city budget.

Mariupol

Establishment of the Administrative Service Center. Mariupol initiated the establishment of a modern Administrative Service Center with the support of donor community, including USAID. The center will aim to deliver administrative services to residents efficiently and transparently. It will be equipped with modern facilities, comfortable waiting area, and electronic queuing system. The center is scheduled to open in the fall of 2016.

Dnipropetrovsk

Elections in Dnipropetrovsk oblast. Following the disputed 2015 mayoral elections in Kryvyi Rih, during which a Samopomich political party candidate challenged election results alleging fraud by the opposition bloc, a re-election was held on March 27, 2016. The pro-opposition candidate, Yuriy Vilkul, who has been the mayor of Kryvyi Rih since 2010, won the re-elections with over 40 percent of votes.

Kharkiv

Modern Administrative Services Center to be opened in Kharkiv. A new regional Center for Administrative Services is planned to open in Kharkiv in early 2017. The project to revamp, consolidate, and modernize citizen services will be financed in cooperation with the City Administration. This is a unique collaboration in that cooperation between national and local governmental bodies has rarely, if ever, been done before at this scale. The new Center will work alongside the existing centers in the region but the Regional Center will provide both administrative and social services for Kharkiv City citizens, residents of the entire Kharkiv Oblast, as well as citizens from neighboring oblasts, such as Poltava.

Odesa

Pro-Maidan forces protest old guard mayor. For nearly the entirety of this reporting period, pro-reform Maidan activists have staged an ongoing protest of the administration of Mayor Gennidy Trukhanov. Trukhanov was re-elected as Mayor in late 2015, and has been accused of supporting separatist forces and having ties to the ousted Yanucovich regime and organized

crime. Activists and the regional government, led by former Georgian President Mikhail Saakasvili, have also accused the Mayor's administration of intentionally undermining key reforms. While tensions continue to run high in Odesa, the situation has remained peaceful, even during the anniversary of 2014 violence which claimed the lives of 48 residents.

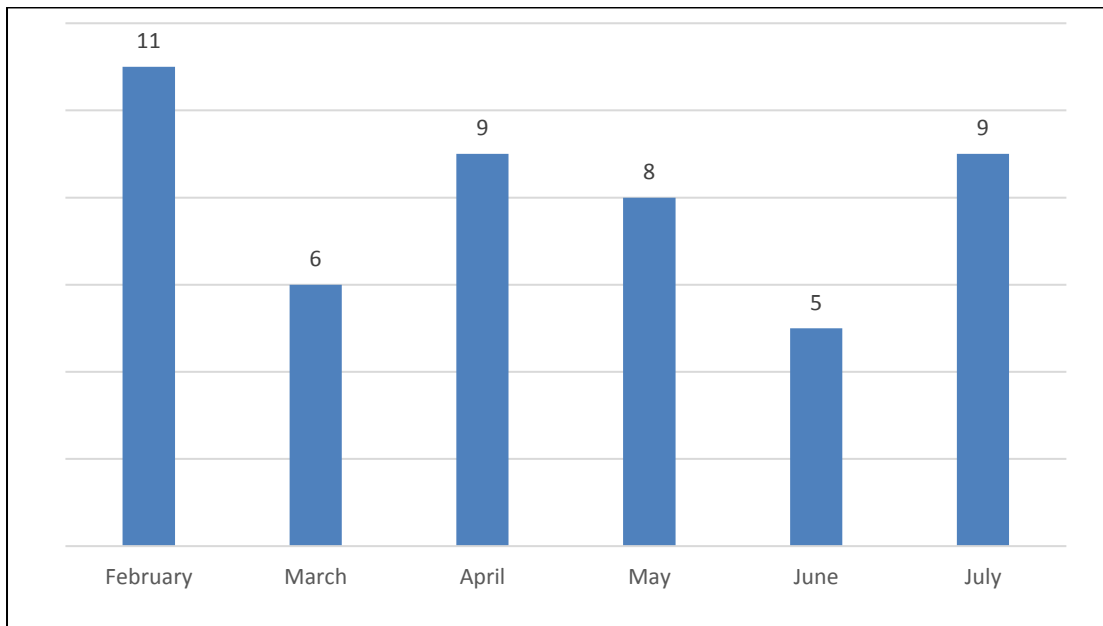
Donbas (Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts)

Slovyansk and Kramatorsk celebrate Liberation Day. The eastern cities of Slovyansk and Kramatorsk in the Donetsk region celebrated the day the Ukrainian army expelled the Russian-backed separatist forces on July 5th. For the local population, this day has become an important symbol of national unity and identity for the people of the Donbas.

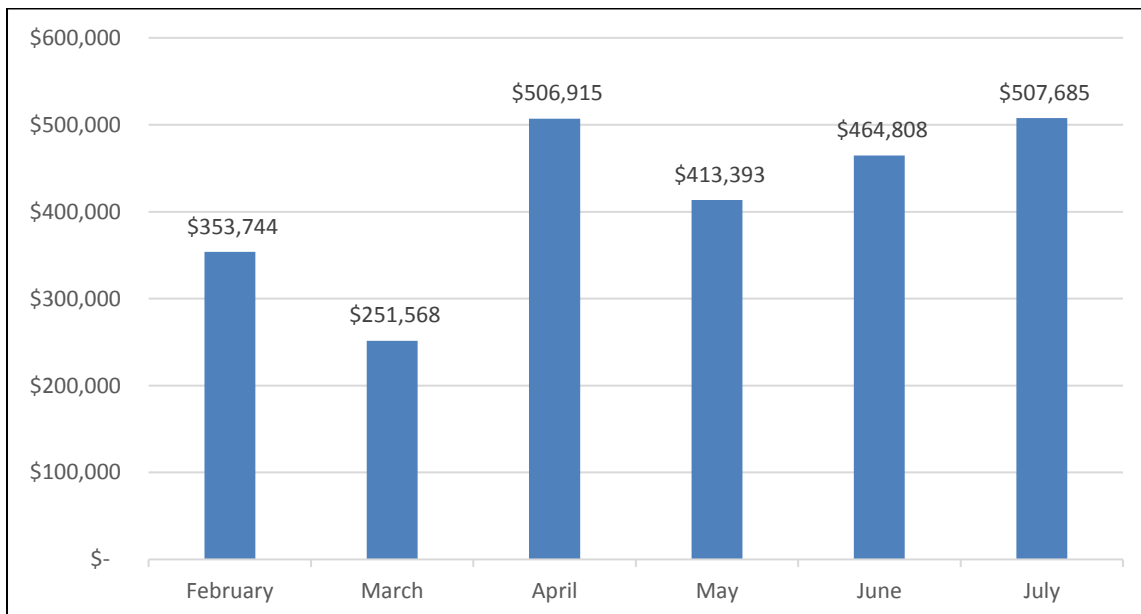
GRANTS SUMMARY

Between February 1, 2016 and July 31, 2016, UCBI funded a total of 48 activities, including cleared and completed grants, short-term technical assistance (STTA), and direct distribution of goods and services (DDGS).

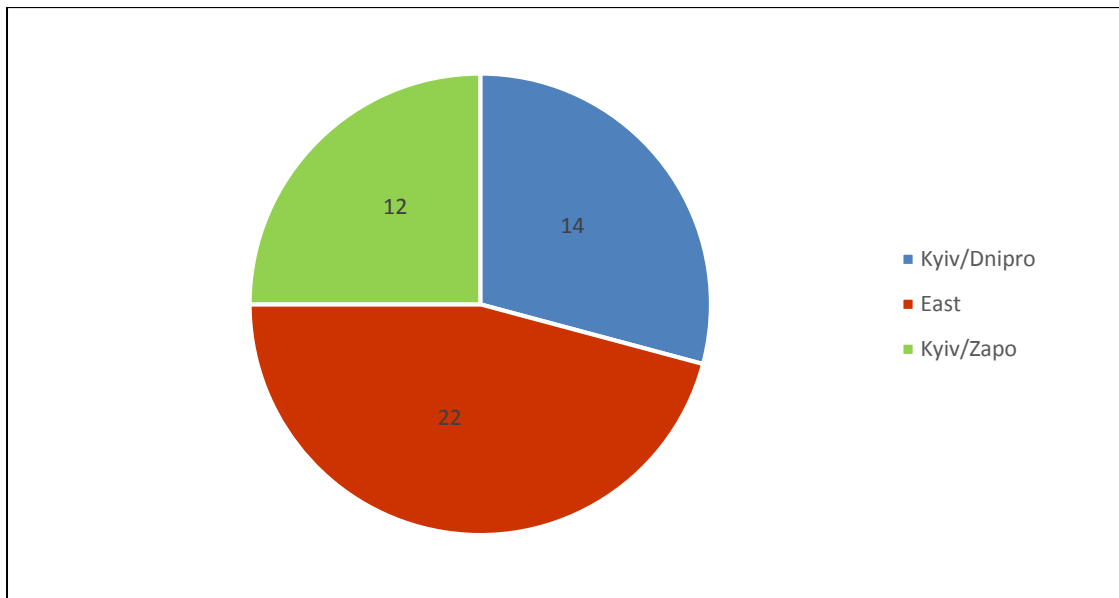
Number of grants cleared: February 2016 - July 2016



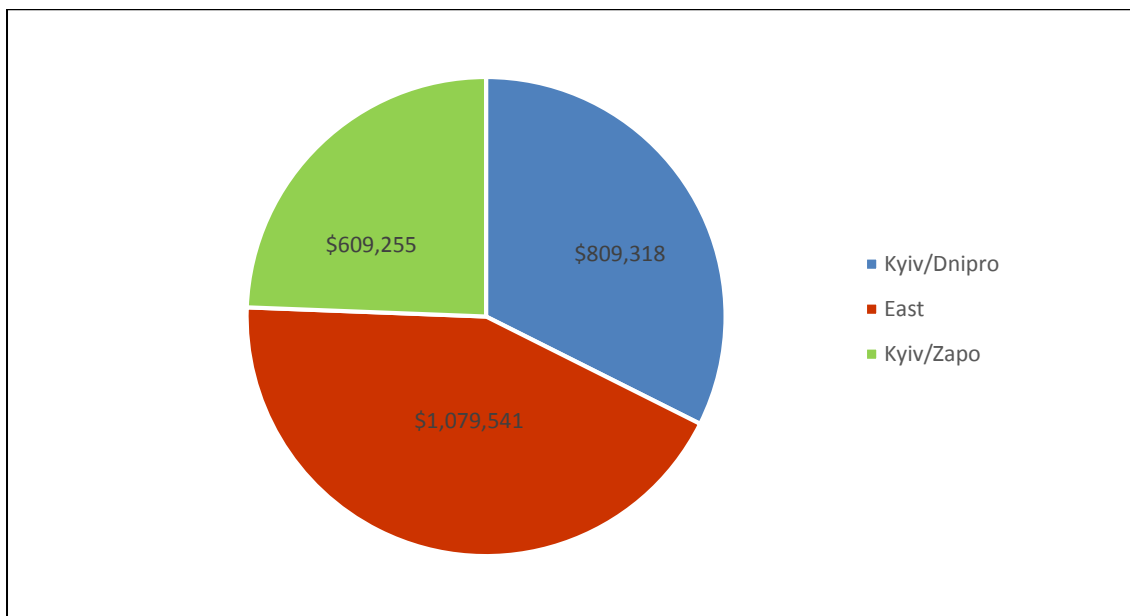
Dollar amount of grants cleared, February 2016 - July 2016



Number of grants cleared by GMUs, February 2016 - July 2016



Dollar amount of grants cleared by GMUs, February 2016 - July 2016



ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

During the reporting period, UCBI continued to address the ongoing political crisis through the design and implementation of strategic assistance and partnerships at the local and national levels. UCBI works in Eastern Ukraine, focusing on population centers in the regions close to the conflict area, which have been targeted by external aggression. The program continues to implement activities in Kharkiv Oblast, the liberated areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, and Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia Oblasts. During the reporting period, UCBI issued grants to NGOs, civic initiatives, state and local authorities, and communities at the international, national, and local levels. UCBI activities illustrating its impact under the program's three objectives are highlighted below.

Objective 1: Increase capacity of vulnerable local communities to manage tensions exacerbated by the conflict in the East

While pride in the Ukrainian identity is increasing across the country, it is also shifting with language, history, and politics taking a back seat to unifying issues like the conflict in the east, economic struggles, the fight against oligarchic rule, and corruption. Being a proactive citizen who holds the government accountable is increasingly becoming a basis of identity that unites Ukrainians. In the East, while many hold a worldview that is sometimes described as Soviet or paternalistic, Ukrainians are increasingly adopting more active approaches to public life and are looking towards establishing a strong local identity. UCBI is implementing activities and working with local groups who promote an inclusive identity to help communities put divisions behind them as they forge a new vision for a united Ukraine.

This spring, UCBI initiated a program with one of its national partners to cultivate and inspire activists, cultural movements, and civil society organizations in 11 Eastern Ukrainian cities. Cultural rallies, held in July 2016, were organized and implemented through a collaboration between a national-level grantee and local organizing committee from each of the 11 locations. This local element was critical to the grantee's approach so communities would connect with Ukrainian culture in a way that was meaningful for them and on their own terms. Elements were introduced into these events to foster creativity and innovation, leading to many new ideas for community development projects that promote unity and productive engagement between citizens, while also strengthening the capacity of local activists to network for more meaningful engagement with local authorities on issues of common concern.

Similarly, UCBI provided the expertise behind the massively popular Serbian EXIT festival to creative groups in Kharkiv, Slovyansk, and Kramatorsk, to assist them in planning civic and social innovation festivals. Civic activists from these three communities participated in planning the festivals, which will be held in September 2016.

UCBI also worked with local organizations in Ukraine to connect people with major European events. In the summer of 2016, the program supported the largest outdoor "fan zone" in Kharkiv, a public viewing area where locals and guests gathered to watch the Euro 2016 football cup. UCBI leveraged the popularity of this event and created a social engagement pavilion, known as the Idea Space, in the fan zone. Idea Space hosted events and outreach activities that highlighted local groups, community initiatives, concert performances, and TED-like talks on issues of local concern. Booths for local NGOs were set up, providing them with wide exposure and a platform to present their work during key hours. The fan zone was attended by more than 100,000 visitors, and over 2,000 attended Idea Space activities supported by UCBI.

Mariupol, the largest city in Ukraine's liberated Donbas, has been isolated from Ukrainian culture and politics since the beginning of the conflict. During the reporting period, UCBI supported the establishment of a cultural and arts center in Mariupol in an effort to make the city a model for Ukrainian arts, culture, and reform. The center is a unique place for local residents to gather for cultural events, trainings, workshops, and exhibitions. It helps enhance the profile of Mariupol's pro-reform cultural community.

Provision of critical services, social support and integration for conflict affected groups.

Anti-Terrorist Operations (ATO) veterans and IDPs are the two largest vulnerable groups affected by the armed conflict in Donbas. Their social and economic integration remains one of the critical challenges for the country. In an effort to improve the social environment and bolster public and economic participation of the conflict-affected groups, UCBI partnered with several national and regional civil society organizations to deliver recovery and integration services for the most vulnerable. UCBI also worked with well-known and respected organizations to challenge cultural bias against seeking help for post-traumatic disorders, paving the way for more people to get the help they need.

A Dnipro-based grantee established an *Online Legal Aid Center for IDPs and ATO Veterans*. Since February 2016, the online center has become a trusted point of contact for free legal assistance and qualitative consultations for vulnerable citizens in Ukraine. According to lawyers working at the Center, in the first quarter of operation they received more than 2,000 requests from IDPs and ATO veterans for assistance. Frequently asked questions focus on steps required for IDP status under new laws; registration for state benefits; issues with receiving pensions or other social benefits; and how to apply for plots of land made available by law to ATO veterans.

UCBI continued to support efforts to help people displaced by the conflict and ATO veterans find adequate jobs. The grantee's team of more than 150 volunteers worked under the supervision of eight coordinators in six regional offices in Kyiv, Lviv, Kramatorsk, Dnipro, Lutsk, and Zaporizhzhia. UCBI supported the implementation of two large educational programs, which resulted in more than 1,700 IDP and ATO veteran receiving career consultations, 1,600 participating in 159 training courses programs, and 160 applicants successfully finding jobs following program completion. Another important outcome of this cooperation was the establishment of a business incubator that helps people open and run their own businesses. Participants of the incubator receive consultations and mentoring to assist them in implementing their ideas. To date, 23 out of 50 incubator participants successfully established their own businesses, with several now providing employment to another 14 people from the community. The business incubator has proven to reduce frustration caused by unemployment and lack of economic opportunity among groups affected by the conflict in Donbas.

As the social integration and psychological support of people affected by conflict was a priority for UCBI during this period, the program supported the creation of a unified, easily accessible, and user-friendly resource database that includes useful information on socio-psychological, legal, and educational services for ATO veterans across Ukraine. The web portal was launched alongside social media messages and an outdoor campaign on billboards across six of the largest cities in Ukraine. National TV channels and radio stations eagerly offered their support for the initiative as well. As of May 2016, 536 verified organizations and initiatives from 135 locations around the country have been added to the platform, making it the only online database for social aid to demobilized soldiers in Ukraine. Acknowledging it as a trusted source of information, the Ministry of Interior of Ukraine issued an order obliging its local military

commissariats to register at the web portal. Now demobilized veterans have access to information to get the psychological help they need.

Objective 2. Increase constructive engagement between government and citizens in vulnerable communities

UCBI activities under this objective aimed to support members of local government to demonstrate reform, as well as increase civic engagement on issues of local governance and implementation of national reform processes. Ukrainians in all parts of the country want an end to the culture of corrupt officials who pilfer public resources with impunity and undermine efficient, European-style services. There are a number of tangible ways in which UCBI can quickly demonstrate a new relationship between the state and citizens at the local level, and in many communities local officials are willing partners in efforts to improve transparency, invite citizen involvement in decision making, and improve service delivery. In cases where the old way of doing business still dominates local government, UCBI supported citizen efforts to advocate for reform.

Making local government spending more transparent. UCBI is helping civil society and local governments in Eastern Ukraine demonstrate a commitment to reform and transparency by making the open source e-platform ProZorro, an innovative online government e-procurement system, a reality. In collaboration with a Dnipro-based NGO, UCBI trained nearly 1,000 government employees and local leaders on how to use the system; conducted public awareness campaigns about the system; and, developed and implemented an approach to monitor the use of ProZorro in Dnipro. Today, Dnipro is a leader in the use of ProZorro. Nearly all government procurement in the region are conducted with ProZorro and reports suggest the city has saved as much as \$2.6 million this year alone.

UCBI leveraged this success in Dnipro, expanding the approach to other regions of the East, including Donetsk and Luhansk. UCBI's ProZorro partner worked with pro-reform city council members and activists in cities like Slovyansk, Severodonetsk, and Mariupol to monitor and ensure its fair use. In Slovyansk, for example, when elements of city council attempted to block the full implementation of ProZorro, UCBI was able to quickly work with pro-reform council members and activists to hold an information campaign that dispelled misinformation about the system and successfully argued for its implementation. In these Donbas communities, the implementation of ProZorro is an important opportunity for reform-minded members of local government to make good on campaign promises and build the expectation for openness and accountability among their constituents. ProZorro is now among the most visible reforms and its implementation has become a primary indicator of local authorities' commitment to reversing corrupt practices.

Objective 3. Increase citizen resilience against divisive and biased information

The conflict in Ukraine's East is fueled not only by foreign fighters and equipment, but also by an aggressive propaganda campaign. Many aspects of the conflict, including government and civil society's attempts to manage it, are either not effectively communicated or are undermined by propaganda. Providing relevant, timely, and accurate information is an integral part of any stabilization effort. The Government of Ukraine's lack of a robust information strategy leaves many citizens scrambling for accurate information about the government's policies addressing the conflict and its immediate impact. While the international community has invested large sums in progressive media outlets which report on reform efforts and act as independent sources of news and information, these outlets have low consumption data, particularly in the

East. These media outlets also traditionally have been more preoccupied with the production of content rather than expanding their market share and building a broader audience.

Audiences in the East, according to a UCBI-funded media consumption study, generally tend to rely on national media outlets for news and information. However, this information is not as relevant to people at the local level which inhibits their ability to make informed choices about how to engage with their local authorities. Local media markets are dominated by outlets which are owned by local oligarchs or government bodies and are generally used to promote the interests of their owners. Few people consume locally produced media for news and information, with a few notable exceptions, because of its poor quality, perceived bias, and the lack of a strong advertising and marketing plan. This contributes to local media environments being saturated with programming that promotes local political perspectives and lack of independent and objective reporting by the local outlets on events in their region.

Supporting Tolerance and Media Literacy Education. UCBI helped develop and launch the first government sanctioned tolerance and media literacy curriculum for high school students in Ukraine. UCBI's partnership with a Ukrainian civil society organization working to promote critical thinking skills by developing innovative educational programs, resulted in the creation of the 'Mind the Gap' course. The course subsequently received official approval by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education to be integrated into the public school curriculum nationwide. This is the first civic educational initiative that trains participants to find ways to promote critical thinking, tolerance, and understanding among different social groups in order to promote conflict resolution skills and prevent mass media manipulation. UCBI also supported printing and distribution of textbooks for the course, 15,000 of which will be distributed in schools in Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv, and liberated areas of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts. Thus far, the course has been introduced in 750 schools across 10 oblasts and demand for this program continues to grow with impressive speed.

Building the capacity of local media partners. Residents of eastern Ukraine are both the targets and victims of an ongoing information war between Ukraine and Russia and its surrogates in occupied Donbas, aimed at distorting the truth and winning support. During the reporting period, UCBI worked to increase access to information in key areas in the east in order to increase confidence and understanding of the transition and conflict and reduce the effects of propaganda and external aggression. UCBI continues to support independent media and key messages targeting vulnerable communities and politically undecided groups in eastern Ukraine in order to strengthen pro-Ukrainian and pro-reform activists in the region.

During the reporting period, UCBI partnered with one of the biggest media organizations in eastern Ukraine to produce and broadcast 16 TV programs and live-broadcast themes on Donetsk regional radio and TV to key audiences in Mariupol and across Donetsk oblast. The grant also built the capacity of the grantee to sustain the Mariupol-based TV program as an independent media product. UCBI facilitated the release of a weekly television program that appeals to progressive residents in Mariupol, highlighting moderate views on reform and activist issues.

Coaching and Mentoring UCBI's Media Partners. UCBI commissioned a media consultant to spend two weeks examining the media environment in eastern Ukraine and to provide recommendations for UCBI partners on how they could improve content and viewership. The consultant conducted TV and social marketing training and mentoring for regional media in Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk, and government held areas of Donetsk. One of the findings of the assessment was that Ukraine currently has a large and diverse media environment with an array of news and information for consumers who choose to seek it out.

Another finding was that while there generally has been an emphasis among the donor community to increase the quality and quantity of news and information, there has not been a corresponding push to direct that content towards the appropriate audiences through strategic marketing and advertising.

Data Driven Development: Understanding the media environment in the targeted regions of Ukraine. During the reporting period, UCBI commissioned a detailed media consumption poll in the five most eastern oblasts and Odesa, with additional sampling in the DPR/LPR controlled areas. The media consumption survey revealed that a clear majority of Ukrainians in the eastern oblasts get their information from TV (over 80 percent). In government-controlled areas of Donetsk oblast, people watch both Ukrainian and Russian TV news, although the vast majority watch Ukrainian TV (the most popular outlet, Inter was accessed by 64 percent of the population in the seven days prior to being surveyed). Since Ukrainian authorities banned the broadcast of Russian stations in Ukraine, consumption of Russian TV news has plummeted and generally Ukrainians viewers have shifted to the consumption of Ukrainian national channels. This research provided an extremely detailed view of media consumption habits and preferences in the UCBI target regions. The survey coupled these consumption habits with the political leanings of the respondents so that media outlets which seek to expand their viewership/readership into new demographics have a much clearer roadmap on how to better target them. This quantitative and qualitative research on the local media situation and media perceptions in Kharkiv, Odesa, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk, and government held areas of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts contributed to a better understanding of the local media markets, the structure of media-ownership, and the quality and quantity of local media content. This awareness creates opportunities to design and implement coherent communication approaches to assisting local initiatives, media outlets, and CSOs to provide critical information about the conflict.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index helps shape future programming. While not specifically an M&E tool, UCBI's Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index (SCORE) was completed during this reporting period. SCORE is a representative survey of Ukrainians in every oblast, asking questions about inter-group relations, thoughts on the direction of the country and Ukrainian identity. It revealed that while Ukrainians are surprisingly similar in many respects, significant political differences have the potential to stand in the way of a cohesive vision for the future. Surprisingly, the eastern oblasts of Ukraine emerged as more in favor of a European future than in the past, more pluralistic overall, and more ready for compromise than the west. The findings indicate that UCBI's programming may have had a positive effect on dialogue and shifting opinions in the East, which could be exported to other regions of the country.

Activity Data. A number of activities produced research products providing UCBI with important information on activity outcomes and the external environment. For example:

- Activities aimed at improved economic opportunities conducted surveys of vulnerable groups, identifying trends among these stakeholder groups. These surveys also revealed that a significant number (5,305 in total for two activities) of trainees felt they gained the skills needed to adapt to new conditions.
- An IDP integration activity conducted research similar to one conducted in 2015 and learned more about the specific needs and challenges of displaced persons to inform activity development. The results of the study demonstrated a significant interest in social and cultural integration activities, and confirmed positive trends with regard to relationships between IDPs and host community members.
- Activities aimed to counter negative perceptions and stereotypes about IDPs in the media conducted content analysis of randomly selected stories to identify changes in the quality of overall media content concerning IDPs. The analysis indicated that news coverage of state social assistance for IDPs accounted for a third of all media materials, however there are still many materials dedicated to information about housing, employment, and social problems. In general, information on IDPs presented in media contains almost no discriminatory remarks, hate speech, or stereotype statements associated with IDPs as a social group.